

REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed October 15, 2004 and to the Examiner Interview conducted on November 15, 2004 in connection with the above-identified patent application.

In the Office Action, claims 30-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 4,145,612 to Cooper in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,983,426 to Vanek. Claims 35, 36, and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cooper in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,754,997 to Lussi, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,484,571 to Velazquez.

In addition to the above, claims 37 and 39 were merely objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but were indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim (claim 35) and any intervening claims (claim 36).

Lastly, claims 1-29 were allowed.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the interview conducted with applicants' attorney on November 15, 2004. During that interview, independent claims 30 and 35 were discussed and a tentative agreement was reached to amend independent claim 30 to include the limitation of the first connection area of the medical appliance support interface being a non-planar connection area defined by the associated table. It was discussed during the interview that none of the prior art, alone or in combination, teaches, suggests, or fairly discloses a medical appliance support interface including first and second connection areas, the first connection area being non-planar, defined by the associated table, and including the other limitations as set out in claim 30.

In the Amendment above, applicants have tendered an amendment to independent claim 30 to include the limitation of the first connection area being a non-planar connection area. For at least the above reasons, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 30 and claims 31-34 dependent therefrom are patentably distinct and unobvious over the references of record. Allowance of claims 30-35 is therefore respectfully requested.

In addition to the above, independent claim 35 was discussed during the telephonic interview. During that interview, a tentative agreement was reached to add the limitation of the accessory connection interface being defined by a plurality of curved surfaces of the patient support member in order to reinforce the structural

features of the claimed surgical table as distinguishing over the prior art. It was agreed that none of the prior art, alone or in combination, teaches, suggests, or fairly discloses an accessory connection interface defined by a plurality of curved surfaces of the patient support member in a surgical table comprising a base member, a column, and a patient support member, together with other elements recited in claim 35.

Applicants have tendered an amendment to independent claim 35 in order to incorporate the limitation discussed during the telephonic interview. It is respectfully submitted that independent claim 35 as amended above and claims 36 and 38 dependent therefrom are patentably distinct and unobvious over the art of record.

With reference once again to the Office Action, it was noted by the Examiner that claim 37 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, applicants have amended independent claim 37 to include the limitations of base claim 35 together with intervening claim 36. For at least the above reason, it is respectfully submitted that claim 37 now written into independent form is patentably distinct and unobvious over the art of record.

Lastly, with reference yet once again to the Office Action, the Examiner stated in the record that claim 39 contained allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, applicants have tendered an amendment to claim 39 above to include the limitations of base claim 35 and intervening claim 36.

For at least the above reason, applicants respectfully submit that claim 39 as amended above to include the limitations of claims 35 and 36 is now in condition for allowance over the art of record.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments, comments, and arguments presented, applicants respectfully submit that all pending claims are patentably distinct and unobvious over the art of record.

Allowance of all pending claims and early notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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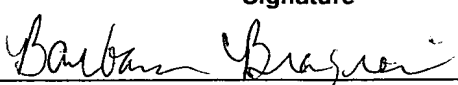
November 19, 2004
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